5/1980

Depot Town Association Inc. meets at the Caboose, 400 Market Place, 7:30 p.m., Thursday, 19 June 1980.

Oops! We're a Little Late This Month

We always try to get the DTA Newsletter out a week before the monthly meeting. Not this time, though. Check your calendar. It's us that's late, not you.

depot town

First "Boomer Days" A Huge Success

Newspapers estimated over two thousand folks attended the May 31st Farmers' Market grand opening and DTA Caboose dedication. The Association thanks its loyal supporters and these workers in particular:

- Lynn Radke, for exhibiting her great collection of Tramp Art. It drew raves all through the week and one Belleville family recognized a recent ancestor in a Tramp Art-framed wedding portrait. It was one of the few times such folk art could be traced to its source.
- To Jack Miller for the use of his showroom for half the Tramp Art show.
- To Mary Liskow for preparing and serving the unique and tasty Mulligan Stew to the multitude of boomers.
- To John Waite for maintaining a safe and happy hobo jungle on Frog Island throughout a stormy weekend — and for staffing the Caboose all through its dedication weekend.
- To Frank Leimbach for officiating at the dedication event with Mayor Goodman, State Representative Gary Owen, Congressman Carl Pursell and Frank Jones from the Department of the Interior.
- To Bob Fox for leading six different bike tours of the historic sites along the Huron River.
- To the many "Boomers" who dressed down and paraded from the Water Tower to the sanctuary of Depot Town.
- and the many others who worked for the Association in the preparation and execution of Depot Town's first Boomer Days.

New Sign on the MCRR Depot

Other cities usually hang their name from the eaves of the Depot facing down the track in each direction. Not so in Ypsilanti. When the new sign was installed last month it had to be mounted on poles in the ground since the building could not stand the extra weight. We're glad to see the sign and happy also to hear that architects should begin restoring the old Michigan Central Depot late this summer.

Painting the Town

Barry LaRue may have a lifetime career in painting Depot Town. By the time he gets it all painted, his first projects will be ready for another coat. His current project is David and Carol Zaar's building at 27 E. Cross St. Dusbiber and Troutman's "And Everything Nice" started the pink and purple (?) color scheme and now the unusual theme covers the building. Sounds awful, doesn't it? But just look at the results. Delightful!

May 31, 1980

Dear Mr. Dodd and Association Members:

I have recently learned from the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service of the successful historic preservation efforts of the Depot Town Association.

I commend you for your efforts which demonstrate not only an outstanding achievement in the area of historic preservation but also illustrate the value of planning. Through the development of a long-range, comprehensive plan for the area, the subsequent implementation of the plan by the dedicated members of the Association, the Depot Town area has been revitalized.

Also deserving of commendation is the reawakening of community involvement and neighborhood pride in Depot Town. In these times of apathy and self-concern, it is inspiring to see what can be accomplished when people join forces to work toward a common goal.

It is a pleasure to present to you our Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service Achievement Award in recognition [illegible] of the Depot Town Association.

Sincerely,

Cecil D. Andrus, Secretary
United States Department of Interior
Washington, D. C.

Oliver's Alibi Designated Historic Building

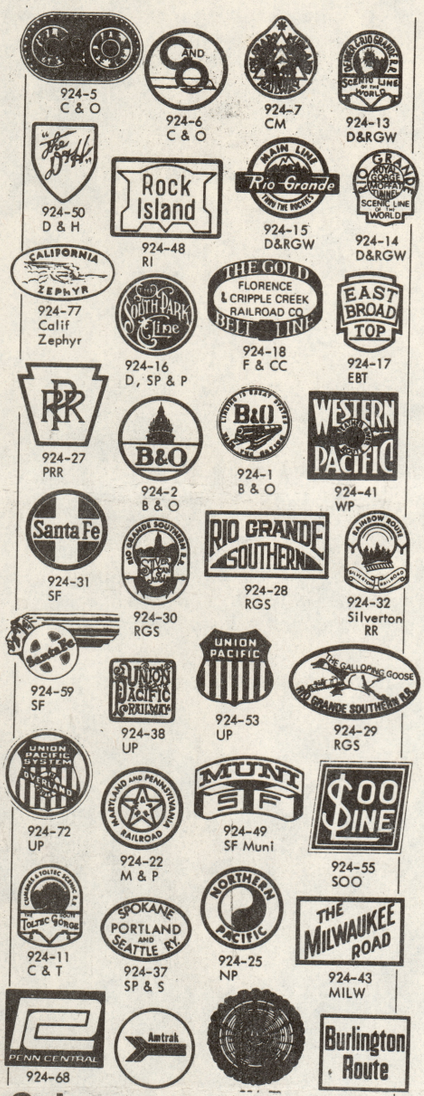
The Ypsilanti Heritage Foundation has named Bill French's **Oliver's Alibi** to the list of historic buildings in the city. Originally the OLIVER HOUSE, the building has been a favorite watering hole of the district since its grand opening in the 1870's. Many have notices the remains of an old sign for "buffet" and "lunch" on the building's east-facing wall, but how many can still make out "The Oliver House" above the second story windows on the south facade? Only the mortar carries some trace of the one hundred year old signage.

Is the ALIBI the only true commercial building in the city to receive this designation? Once a commercial property but now a private residence, the Shankwiler's building at 52 Cross is the only other building in the district to boast the Foundation's plaque. Child and Family Services and the law offices of Stripp, Roberts and Manchester are now commercial, but started out as private homes.

Bills recent facade renovation has certainly saved this stately landmark. After several years of boarded-up windows, the new glazing, plants and paint-job have restored the OLIVER HOUSE to its former glory. *Congratulations!*

D.T.A. Heritage Festival Booth To Commemorate Home Town Breweries

Greg Hochradel and Gary McKeever have organized a fund-raiser for the Association to be held in the Market Walkway between the Eagles and Jim MacDonald's Antiques: "Ypsilanti Remembers Hometown Beer" with photos of early area breweries, ads, and antique beer containers on display. Closed in with an antique wrought-iron fence, umbrella tables will offer one of the few places on the street during the Heritage Festival for guests to sit. Stroh's Brewery (the closest thing we have left to "hometown beer") will supply the kegs in a refrigerated trailer with draft spiggots, cups and pitchers. Stroh's will also supply banners and T-shirts specially printed for the Festival. Greg and Gary will solicit your ideas and support at the June DTA meeting.



Caboose Logo Sought

We encourage the many graphic artists in the neighborhood to give us a series of logotypes to choose from for the caboose. Such a logo could include any of the following:

- Depot Town Association, Inc.
- Depot Town Mid-Central Railway and Redevelopment Company (DTM-CRRC)
- 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan
- Farmers' Market
- Art work depicting the Caboose setting

Caboose Commemorative Plaque

Board Members and Stockholders are prominently displayed on a walnut and brass plaque now on exhibit in the DTA Caboose. Mark Russell of Contemporary Wood fabricated the handsome piece and left just enough space for future contributors to finish the project of buying, moving and installing the Association's new home. Your help is both appreciated and needed.

Painting continues on the Caboose and much volunteer labor is appreciated. Wiring is complete and we await the installation of the light fixtures. Michigan Alternative Alert Systems Incorporated has donated and installed the alarm system. If you hear a very loud bleating siren in the Market Place, simply call the police and have them look for suspects with blood streaming from their ears.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

(from the 1976 Depot Town Plan by Preservation/Urban Design/Incorporated(:

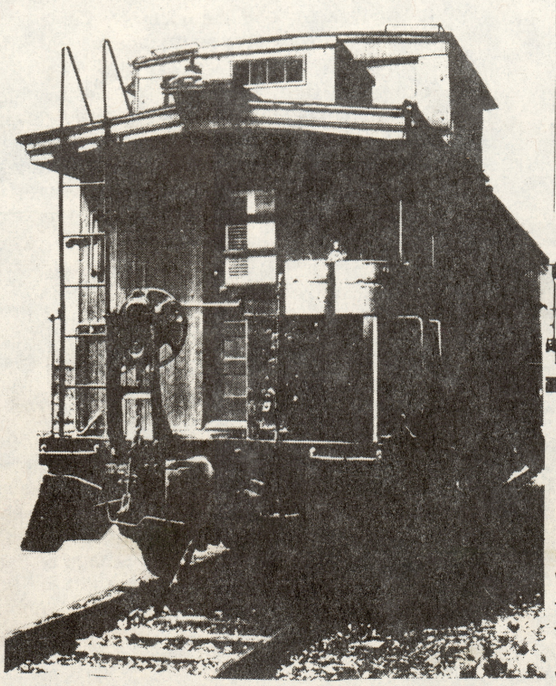
The key to making this plan work is the fullest possible use of Depot Town's resources. Businesses which lend stability need support and encouragement, as do developments which bring new life to the area. To accomplish this, opportunities and assets must be promoted outside of the neighborhood itself.

Depot Town needs to be made known to the market which can support its businesses, existing and new. Simply within walking distance, two potentially strong markets exist, Eastern Michigan University to the west and the residential area to the north and east.

An effort should be made to "sell" the neighborhood to potential buyers and developers who are sensitive to its special character. Persuasive arguments can be made for the economics of recycling older buildings, such as the following:

"For example, one economic reality may simply be that the dollars involved in preserving buildings are less than the cost of new buildings. But more often than not, the total dollar expenditure for preservation, including the acquisition of the property involved, is about the same as for new construction. Thus the plus factor is achieved by developing the potential assets into a final project of greater amenity—one having the right location, more space in either height or volume, more area or more character, materials of a special quality or a potential for time savings in construction. Any one or more of these factors produces more marketability while also perserving a landmark and the environment." (George M. Notter in *Economic Benefits of Preserving Old Buildings.* The Preservation Press, p. 59).

The Depot Town Association, perhaps in coordination with the city, should consider developing a program to promote the neighborhood. Certainly, there is enough artistic talent in residence to produce high quality publicity tools, such as posters, flyers or newspaper advertisements.



ANTIQUES, Buy & sell

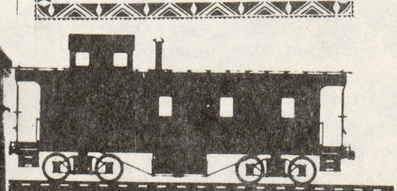
DEPOT EXCHANGE

54 E. Cross St., (near tracks)
Depot Town
Ypsilanti, Mich. 48197

313-482-1780

Spear Genius
Personalized Geometric Hair Designs By Kathy
483-1305 482-3633

Ted's Auto Electric
307 N. River Street
Phone: 483-1238



New Caboose Photo Available

John Waite's excellent photograph of the caboose on a cold winter night is on display in the window of River Art Works at 50 E. Cross. He offers it as a fund-raiser for the caboose fund: $45 framed, $25 matted, and $10 for the print alone. Contact John or River Art Works.